ROBA D'ITALIA

WHICHER

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ROBA D'ITALIA

BOOKS OF VERSE BY G. M. WHICHER

ON THE TIBUR ROAD (1911)
With G. F. Whicher

FROM MUSCATINE (1912)
Verses from an Iowa Home

A HALF-CENTURY OF SONG (1924)
Anthology of Hunter College Verse

ROMAN PEARLS AND OTHER VERSES (1926)

SONNET SINGING (1928)

ROBA D'ITALIA (1930)
Reprints

ROBA D'ITALIA

REPRINTS FROM
"ROMAN PEARLS"
AND
"ON THE TIBUR ROAD"

BY
GEORGE MEASON WHICHER
AND
GEORGE FRISBIE WHICHER

THE BOOKMART
AMHERST, MASS.
MCMXXX

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

PREFACE

In this book are reprinted most of the verses in the volume entitled *On the Tibur Road* (First edition 1911, Second edition 1913) the work of myself and my son, George Frisbie Whicher. Joined with this material are all the verses which are in any way reminiscent of Italy, from a later volume of mine (*Roman Pearls and Other Verses, 1926*). Some additions, omissions, and changes have been made in both divisions. Further there are included some short selections from Vergil, chiefly from the minor poems; for the title, *Roba d'Italia,* adapted from Story's famous book of nearly seventy years ago, is evidently capable of covering these, and even more miscellaneous elements.

It was in the middle Nineties of the last century, that, spurred on by the wit and humor of Eugene Field in his *Echoes from the Sabine Farm,* I began experimenting with a kind of translation intended to echo, if possible, the mannerisms of various poets, as they might be supposed to be shown in imaginary renderings of Horace's poetry. Later, other writers, more facile and more fortunate, developed the type in great variety and with great success. It was not until 1911 that my attempts were printed in the Tibur Road volume, in which I brought to light the work of my son,—translations, serious or comic, from the Odes, or experiments in various verse forms on Horatian subjects,—many of which he had written as an undergraduate. To repeat the words of the preface: "That not all of them were written in the first

college year, will be easily inferred; but the critically inclined who conclude that all might have been, will not quarrel with our subtitle," A Freshman's Horace. Our *jeu d'esprit* had an unexpected success, and both editions are now exhausted. The same is true of *Roman Pearls,* and the not infrequent calls for one volume or the other have led to this reprinting. May this book meet as many indulgent friends as its predecessors!

G. M. W.

Stonygarth
Amherst
1930

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ROBA D'ITALIA

I

ROMAN PEARLS

ROMAN PEARLS

Roman Pearls! Not pearls at all!
  Are they worth the taking home?
Fragile toys, unfit to call
  By the name of pearls and Rome.

Yet they bear Rome's name, at least.
  Ye who may not plumb the seas
For pearls of price to deck your feast
  Well may take delight in these.

See; one is like a tear new-shed;
  One is blue: a true-love token;
One is glowing ruby-red,—
  What's the stain when hearts are broken?

Here I linger at your gate.
  Buy, oh, buy the wares I bring;
For old Rome, so gray, so great,
  Lends her name to what I sing.

MONTE CAVO

(1912)

The Road of Triumph sees no conqueror now
  Save summer's heat that slays the buds of spring,
  Or the victorious autumn winds, that fling
A russet banner on the chestnut bough.
No pastured victim bleeds to pay the vow,
  No festive altar smokes, no plaudits ring;
  But unaffrayed the shepherd lad may bring
His flock to feed on Monte Cavo's brow.

O Ye who came with all the pomp of Rome
To smooth this pavement with exultant tread
And shake the silence with applausive breath!
Now foxes use your highway to their home;
The dust of ages drifts above your head;
And all your choruses are stopped in death.

SUNSET FROM THE PINCIAN HILL

Day hastens whither Empire long has fled;
The Alban Hills with fleeting splendor glow;
While purple pageantry of clouds o'erhead
  Mocks the gray wreck below.

Palace and temple, wall and gate and tower,
The victor's arch, the victim's gilded dome,
Flaunt their old glories; for a sunset hour
Stands the frail vision,—Rome.

THE TOMB OF BIBULUS

Once was I young, and stood here all elate
  In the vain glory of fresh travertine,
Where passed the broad North Road. But now I wait,
Crouched like a beggar at a palace gate,
  Broken and scorned,—to rail with beggar's whine
  At one who takes the place I counted mine.

Be not so fain, O gay and glittering pile!
  To bare your marble bosom to the sky.
Rome is your lover now; but bide a while,
Till twenty centuries pass; and men will smile
  To see your ruined charms, and pass you by;
  When you shall be a moral, even as I.

THE ALTAR TO AN UNKNOWN GOD *

"Sei Deo Sei Deae Sacrum."

Unchanged the altar stands where long ago
  Some Speaking Voice, some Bird, had given a sign
  To build it on the sloping Palatine,
Far from the roar of Roman life below.
And here with chant and hymn and incense-glow,
  With flesh of bulls and pouring of rich wine,
  Calvinus hallowed in his turn the shrine
—Of god or goddess, which? He did not know!

Yet mock not his devotion. One who knows
How rare the Vision, human hearts how blind,

* See page 86.

Will reverence every spot where Heaven outpours
Its least of glory. Here I lay this rose
Upon thine altar, Roman; for my mind
Touched by thy faith a Power unknown adores.

THE ARX AT TUSCULUM

What vistas from this wreck-strewn, wind-swept height!
Here lilac mountains; there the shimmering sea.
My Tully, when this beauty met your sight,
Did you forbode this ruin that would be?
Not so. At your loved villa in these hills,
You feigned what long discussions with your friends!
Of just and unjust, human goods and ills,
And what are true and mankind's proper ends.

And now?—Yon oak, topping the concrete mass,
Repeats the moral, stale before your days,
How new life springs where men and empires pass;
No wisdom may endure; all, all decays.
One fate befalls your wit, your rights and wrongs,
With the dull poet and his trivial songs.

FROM SIRMIO

Where crystal-clear Benacus' waters flow
  Laughing a welcome on the rocky shore,
  As once Catallus bade them long before,—
Where starry-eyed the purple asters grow,

In much-belovèd, lovely Sirmio,—
These leaves were plucked: one of the olive hoar,
Athene's crown; and one that Mænads bore,
Of Bacchic ivy.
Never would you know,
O Roman, whose great memory fills this scene,
Her power austere who rules the temperate will
And stays the prophet-soul secure, serene.
Your choice the thyrsus, the fierce joy that scars;
And passion-torn your accents lure us still,
Or from the mire, or heard among the stars.

THE ROSES OF ASSISI

Red roses of Assisi
Behind the sheltering glass
Are blooming near the holy church
Where reverent pilgrims pass.
In ordered ranks behold them stand,
Like silent saints at prayer;
The watched and guarded buds expand
To breathe an incensed air.

Ever they hear the mellow bells
Toll out the measured day,
While sweet the organ-thunder swells,
And loud the canons pray.
With mass and hymn and litany
The echoing aisles are stirred;
No sight irreverent they see,
Nor hear unhallowed word.

Never the wastrel breezes blow
Their sweetness to the dust;
Never the silken petals show
The stain of canker rust.
Unsoiled by frolic showers,
Unscorched by joyous suns,
St. Francis' thornless flowers
Live safe as cloistered nuns.

SCHOLIUM

"Quod si in hoc erro, qui animos hominum immortalis esse credam. . . ."

"IF here I err!" IF this be so!
IF, when we sleep there come no night!—
But was it not your boast to know,—
To see,—where others have no light?
What profit that a Tully plead the cause,
If at the end comes this doubt-haunted clause?

You say a Cincinnatus' toil,
A Scipio's genius, Cato's worth,
Cheat dark oblivion of her spoil
And find unending fame on earth:
But will the jealous gods bestow new praise
And wreathe once more a mortal's rival bays?

And they of nameless plows and swords,—
The souls that travailed all in vain:
No Ciceronian page records
Their struggle. May they strive again?
Will they find favor in immortal eyes
Whom man adjudged unworthy of the prize?

And this, your dream, that Love eschew
The dread eclipse that dims Renown:
Will death yield Tullia to you,
And yet withhold a Cæsar's crown?
Will the grim Three relent in after years,
Who now but mock your unavailing tears?

'T is but your dream. And yet . . . and yet . . .
What else? . . . It pleases passing well,
Could but a certain proof be met!—
Stay; I have heard a poet tell
Of one (so ran the tale) some god had banned
And driven afar to seek an unknown land;

And ever when sure stars were gone
He loosed a dove, that sought the shore;
Though chart or pilot there was none,
He followed where it flew before;
Undoubting o'er the trackless main he passed
And in fair lands found anchorage at last.

To some uncharted port we go:
Whither and why? Your wisdom fails,
Your reasons fade, O Cicero!
For you, for us, what then avails?
When systems halt and keen-eyed logic tires,
We'll trim our sails by our own hearts' desires.

AVE CAESAR!

This is Time's sorry jest! You could bestride
Colossus-like the pygmy state of Rome;

The masters of the earth were fain to hide
Their shrunken thrones beneath your sheltering dome;
Beside your foot-stool Empire made her home,
And conquerors took your name for ample wage;
Your deeds flare bright in History's brightest tome;
Fame's fullest cup slaked not your noble rage;
And dying you could leave a world for heritage.

And this your volume,—the ensanguined roll
Of legions, cities, chieftains, captives, ships,
Sieges and slaughters,—all the crimson toll
By courage paid to genius: Cicero's lips
Once praised its lucid flow; the fiery whips
Of Cato's wrath assailed the reeking tale;
It shadowed forth to Pompey that eclipse
Full soon to make his easy glories pale,
And bring on Rome war's long, immeasurable bale.

How are the mighty withered! You are now
Become your book, and that (O last of woes!)
Shrunk to a school-room bogey. Pedants plow
With salt your fields; and there no harvest grows
Save juiceless weeds of grammar; never knows
Your page the poet's heart, the soldier's eyes;
But over it still unceasing conflict flows,
Bewildered warriors join discordant cries,
Butchered to make the loathing school-girl's exercise!

Imperial Caesar dead—the poet dreamed—
Might stop a hole to keep the wind at bay;
And musing on your fate, to me it seemed
You well might envy that not-useless clay!

Yes, we, that through the sieves of youth today
Watch, Danaid-like, your noteless stream consume
(To find no guerdon of our toil for aye!)
Salute you, Caesar, partner in the gloom
Where Prince and Pedagogue abide in equal doom.

COR CORDIUM

"Then what is life? I cried."

At last the morning breaks; the peaceful bay
Mirrors again the rocky Spezian shore;
Again across the unclouded heaven pour
The tranquil splendors of a new-born day.
Through olive grove, on vineclad hillside play
The idle breezes; hushed the angry roar;
The sky is black,—the surges foam,—no more;
For with the night the storm has passed away.

O poet heart, with doubt and dream outworn!
When the long sighing of the midnight ceased
At the fair dawning of that brighter life,—
When on your sad eyes broke the eternal morn,
Within the Heart of Hearts did you find peace
And learn the secret of this weary strife?

WENTWORTH PLACE

(The house in Hampstead where Keats passed the last years of his life in England.)

Across the bitter leagues of sundering brine,
The death-struck lad, exiled to Italy,
Sent back, like homing doves, his thoughts to thee,

Home of his dreams and of his love the shrine.
Oh, passing wonder, that these walls of thine,
So noteless—transitory—yet should be
The mansion of the glory that we see,
Passion so wasting, visions so divine!

Forever stand! And ever in the spring,
When plum trees deck their boughs with fragrant snow,
Let through the hush the nightingale chant clear
To us in dreams!—as once he heard it sing
To his enraptured soul.—For well we know:
Beauty abides, a joy eternal, here.

THE SPANISH STEPS

On either side the houses stand
Orange-russet, buff, and tanned;
With the cataract stairs aflow from above
In the dead-leaf tints that painters love,

From the Trinity towers upon the Mount
Down to Bernini's spindling fount;
And bent over all the wondrous hue
Of a Roman winter's tender blue.

Here on the street a riot of green—
Holly and broom,—while bright between,
Iris and rose, and a scarlet row
Where tall poinsettia blossoms glow.

Did he see it thus at a Christmas tide,
From yonder room where he pined and died,
That lonely English lad, who came
With a heart athirst for love and fame?

Ah! Spanish Steps! since Keats's day
What hungry hearts have passed your way!
What longings for love and fame and home
Have sunk to rest in the arms of Rome.

THE DEATH CHAMBER OF KEATS

Where martyrs bled and purple Caesars reigned,
Where every idle gust of winter flings
In empty air dust of forgotten kings,—
Rome! where world-empire oft was lost and gained,
While palace, tomb, and temple, wrecked and stained,
Tell of dead glories,—what the lure that brings
Our fancy from these wide imaginings
In one dim upper room to brood enchained?

It is the tale oft told but ever new,
Of life that fades and will not stay its prime,
Of passion withering by its altar-flame.
Yet death's rich gifts, John Keats, abide with you,
Desired of men since first recorded time:
Unfaded Youth, unchanging Love, and Fame.

THE GRAVE OF KEATS

The Roman violets blossom on your tomb,—
  Not Surrey daisies nor the Kentish may;
  No swaying elms above you, but the bay;
And yonder towers the alien cypress gloom.
Harsh fate, it seemed, that grudged your ashes room
  To rest beneath some quiet orchard spray
  Where English blackbirds pipe the opening day
When England's April fills the dale with bloom.

Yet better so,—that not your island home
Alone might know and love your wreathèd rhyme.
While this, our speech, is glorious with your fame,
Fitly upon the withered breast of Rome,—
Mother of Empire, hoary bride of Time—
Sparkles the deathless luster of your name.

II

ON THE TIBUR ROAD

TO THE VICTIM

Q. H. F.

The twittering sparrows build their nest
Unawed, in many an ancient fane.
We strew our rubbish with the rest;
Yet undefiled thy courts remain,
Thanks to the serried years, the biting rain.
O Master of the Lyric Strain!
What worst can dim thy shining best?

ON SABINE HILLS

On Sabine hills when melt the snows,
Still level-full his river flows;
Each spring-tide now his valley fills
With cyclamen and daffodils;
And summers wither with the rose.

Swift-waning moons the cycle close:
Birth,—toil,—mirth,—death; life onward goes
Through harvest heat or winter chills
On Sabine hills.

Yet One breaks not his long repose,
Nor hither comes when zephyr blows;
In vain the spring's first swallow trills;
Never again that Presence thrills;
One charm no circling season knows
On Sabine hills.

A PRAYER TO APOLLO

Horace—somewhere upon the Esquiline—
Is ashes now, a moldering bit of bone;
And there, perhaps, a battered slab of stone—
Hymettus marble, streaky serpentine,
Or rose-flushed *giallo* from its Afric mine
(Such as in life the poet would not own)
Tells where his grave lies deep, unsought, unknown,
Below the pavement's roar, the tram-car's whine.

Two thousand years ago! O god that gave
The power divine to save his song from death,
That by his music still our hearts are stirred:
Soon,—soon, my words and I sink to the grave;
Oh, save this praise thus shapen by my breath;
Link deathless to his name one word of mine . . . one word!

ON THE TIBUR ROAD

Not in the fashion of the great,
A-horse with hampering retinue,
The Poet reached his small estate;

Such pomps afflict the well-to-do!
Alone he rides the valley through,
A mule his meagre scrip can bear,
And no invidious eyes compare
Its withers galled or swaying load
With any lordly trains that fare
Along the sunlit Tibur Road.

Ay, pleasant was the way and straight
Where, under skies of softest hue,
The Anio plunged precipitate,
And tall the shadowy plane-trees grew.
Perchance some Chloe fled the view;
Or Pyrrha, seeming unaware,
Twined roses in her fragrant hair,
While green the rushing current flowed;
Or Lyce ogled from her chair
Along the sunlit Tibur Road.

O merry Poet, mild was fate,
On thee no wind untempered blew,
In comradeship most fortunate!
Sweet breath of Sabine vineyards drew
Thee and thy friends, the favored few,
From bustling street and brimming square,
And lured to taste thy country air
Maecenas from his proud abode,
Vergil and Varius—spirits rare!
Along the sunlit Tibur Road.

Envoi

Horace, thy tranquil soul doth share
With us, immersed in coils and care,

The unfading charm of many an ode
That bids us flee from grim despair
Along the sunlit Tibur Road.

PROSPECTUS

Two dreamers we, and dread not Time's mischances;
Let Fortune smile or frown or go or stay,
Our wealth abides; and foul or fair her glances,—
Hey-nonny-nonny!—pipe the jade away!

To tend the Sacred Fire that needs no fuel,—
To dwell on Helicon and pay no rent,—
To meditate the Muse and dine on gruel,—
How rich are we who therewith are content!

Let yon pale cit, whose sole and only classic
Is his fat ledger, cringe and toil and pray.
For us the Spring, the Arbute-tree, the Massic,
And loaf with Horace all the solid day!

We covet not your well-filled, tight-laced purses,
Those gilded garners for the moth and rust;
Leave us but stylus, tablets, Flaccus' verses,
We reign in rags and banquet on a crust.

THE HAUNTS OF HORACE

An ever present source of fresh delight
Lies in the wonderland thy lays unfold;

I read the tales that Sabine farmers told
On winter evenings 'round the embers bright,
The roistering and revelry of night
When spiced Falernian foamed from flagons old,
The songs that lovers to their ladies trolled
In some close nook secluded from the sight.

A sure relief it is, when ill at ease,
To walk with thee in this fair realm of thine,
To watch the choral dance beneath the trees,
And chant the praises of the sacred Nine;
Baffled to gaze as Chloe coyly flees,
Or drink with Lyde draughts of sparkling wine.

THE HOUSE OF HORACE

(1913)

The cold Licenza through the valley brawls;
Unchanged the forest rustles on the hill;
The ploughman to his lagging oxen calls
Amid the self-same vines; and murmuring still
Adown the hollow rock the fountain falls
To yield the wandering herd its welcome chill.
Each sound to him so long familiar grown
Even now the poet's loving ear had known,
Could he but stand again within these walls,
Which once the kindly gods made all his own.

Poor poet! who so dreaded lest his book
Might come at last to be a school-room bore.

How would he mourn to see his cherished nook
Laid bare, a prey for our myopic lore!
Sweet peace has fled, and prying eyes may look
On crumbling step and tessellated floor.
Stripped to the garish light of common day,
The sheltering mould of ages torn away,
Now lie the little rooms, where once he took
Long draughts of ease and let his fancy stray.

Languid Maecenas left the roaring town
To sip the Sabine in this friendly dale;
Here Vergil, white of soul, oft sate him down
To hear old Cervius spin his moral tale;
Pert Davus, heedless of his master's frown,
Plied here his argument without avail;
While each new moon would rustic Phidyle stand
To offer holy meal with pious hand,
Pleasing the tiny gods with rosemary crown,
To bless the increase of her master's land.

O! that far hence, in some dim Sabine glade,
These stones, half-buried in the kindly loam,
Unnoted, undiscovered, unsurveyed,
Might but afford the owl a darkling home!
There might the thrush still warble undismayed,
And timid woodland creatures boldly roam
Through broken arch and plundered portico,
Which heard the poet's footstep long ago;
That so no pang might touch thee, gentle Shade,
This worse than ruined house of thine to know!

REMEMBRANCE

"Non omnis moriar."

Omar is dead, who loved so well his wine;
Above his moldering tomb the roses twine.
And Horace now, for all his Golden Mean,
Is nameless dust upon the Esquiline.

It matters not or sad or glad the strain,
Each sings his hour and goes, nor comes again.
Whate'er he was or had or hoped, is gone;
His Songs alone immortal now remain.

What then will stay, my Friend, for you to guess
Of me, who pass to utter nothingness?
Who have no songs to echo in your heart
When Death shall make my present little less?

Oh, whensoe'er you turn the pages through
Where smiling Horace bares his heart to view,—
When Omar's muted strings wake sweet regret,—
Pause at the leaf and think: "He loved this too."

OF WEALTH

To Q. H. F.

To thee among the singing spheres
Is given a part;
Untarnished by the envious years,
Unmated still thy song appears;
Too kind for scorn, too wise for tears,
Thy matchless art.

Then, Horace, what the scorn I win,—
How all will jest!
If, fleeing from the city's din
(As long ago thou didst begin)
I boast thy lot to mine is kin,
But mine more blest!

Thou too didst shun the smoke, the stress,
The brawling street,
And in thy Sabine wilderness,
On fare of chicory and cress,
The Simple Life thou didst possess,—
A calm retreat.

There by Digentia's quiet shore
Thy mind was bent
With friends to share thy frugal store,
To tell thy vines and cornels o'er,
Above some deathless scroll to pore
In rich content.

Mine too the gifts that match with these;
The gods have given
A bit of land, a clump of trees,
A living spring: what more could please?
Nor I for wider acres tease
Unwilling Heaven.

Strait is my valley; its green hills
Take, too, the beams
Of dawn; or sunset glory spills
Along their crest when whippoorwills

Awake regret, and evening fills
The world with dreams.

Beside my river I can view
My garden-plot;
Here blooms the quince; there apples strew
Their petals; softly falls the dew
On iris, spearmint, and the blue
Forget-me-not.

Ah! happy hours, when soft reclined
On cooling grass,
Within one living page I find
What mirth, wit, wisdom all combined!
A feeling heart, a mellow mind!
Thy Magic Glass!

Yet more: beneath my roof,—where shade
Alternate falls
Of elm and maple zephyr-swayed,—
The choicest gift the gods have made
Abides, my wealth: it never stayed
Within thy walls!

Yes, Flaccus, greater wealth is mine
Than thou hast tried.
Save that sole gift of song divine,
All that the Gracious Ones made thine,
To me—with Love—they now assign,
And thee beside!

O Poet, thine the golden name,
The deathless voice.

One gift is Love and one is Fame.
The gods, who reck nor praise nor blame,
Divide: what bounty wouldst thou claim?
I bless their choice.

DE CONSOLATIONE

Ad Q. H. F.

Quintus, the fate you dreaded worst
Has long been yours;
A tribe you would have held accurst,
As mostly boors,—
We teachers,—seized you from the first.
Lean wits for ages in the schools
With you were fattened.
Professors dam your flow with rules;
Critics and editorial ghouls
Still tear you with scholastic tools;
Full fifty-seven brands of fools
On you have battened.

Jones counts, and finds your lady-loves
By far too many.
Brown writes his learned tome, and proves
You hadn't any!
Noakes notes their too transparent names
Are always Greek.
While for *grande passion* Stoakes, *expertus,* claims
You're still to seek!
Poor Cinara, whose portrait Sir T. Martin
Likes to believe you put your very heart in,—

E'en Cinara to the great Professor Smith
Is all but myth!

Then as for Dr. Verrall and his dreams,—
Beiträge-magic!
To him your very lightest lyric seems
Of import tragic.
Melpomene, who our innocence supposes
Was not yet conscious of her awful mission,
Lurks full of gloom, it seems, beneath your wine-and-roses,
And purple cushion!
That gentle mirth, that wit at which we smile,
Were meant to harrow
(Had we but sense to penetrate your guile)
Our feelings for one doomed Licinius Varro.
Mehercule! no worse a Monstr'-horrend'-ingens-what's-it-icus
Was e'er evolved from any other Apparatus Criticus!

Long-suffering Poet! one stroke more
Thy stars malign have kept in store,
That now must fall:
A great Historian takes the floor
Who knows it all!
To him your works of during brass,
Your *curiosa felicitas,*
Your phrases that so long did pass
For purest classic,
Are parts of one deep-laid design
To *boom the trade in native wine*—
Falernian, Formian, Prænestine,
Calenian, Massic!!

But don't despair: such things are sent
(Unpleasant very!)
To prove your high-piled monument
Perennius aere.
So sane and clear your eyes that saw
Whatever passes,
They must have read this simple law
That strong as brass is:
Not he who 'scaped from beak and claw,—
The Bentley-lion's heavy paw,—
The tiger-Peerlkamp's rending jaw,—
Need break his rest with fear and awe,
When o'er his head with weird he-haw
Stamp the wild asses.

FOR THE EIGHTH OF DECEMBER

(1916)

This festal day, two thousand times returning,
Should light fresh fires on all the altar sods;
His natal day! We should set incense burning,
And call—if gods there were!—upon the gods.
We, his good friends, right joyous should demean us,
Like Horace on the birthday of Maecenas.

Eheu! we lack all Persian apparatus,—
The wine, the nard, the rose's tardy bloom;
No troops of saucy home-bred slaves await us,
Nor polished silver in the fire-lit room;
And as for lyres and lutes of sound convention,
The H.C.L. precludes their very mention.

Around our board what cronies he'd find missing:
No Tyndaris, no Cyrus,—and no quarrel!
No Telephus with his tantalizing kissing,
No Cervius droning his long-winded moral;
No Thaliarch to push the lagging Massic.
What in our party, then, would he find classic?

There is one thing would save us from disaster,
And make our feast full worthy of the day,
A fitting tribute to the Lyric Master,—
I mean, of course, an ode by F. P. A.
Give us but that,—'t were the whole celebration
In Horace's and in our estimation.

Then string your lyre, gay Spirit of the Column;
Make glad the date that gave our poet birth.
The times are dark; our mood is tragic-solemn,
And much we need the medicine of mirth.
Let clash the shell! and long shall we remember
Through dreary months this bright day of December.

ON FRIENDSHIP

(*Model for a convertible toast*)

When Quintus Flaccus tunes his Lesbian Lyre
And cribs a brand-new meter from the Greeks,
What best can kindle his poetic fire?
What theme most moves us when the Poet speaks?

Sure not his frail, imaginary ladies;
Lord, no! they leave the modern bosom cold.

Not the grim Shades he (almost) saw in Hades;
Our consciences are clearer, or more bold.

So oft he preaches Golden Moderation,
He makes one long to dare life's last and worst.
He scolds the frantic rich: our indignation
Waxes but faint,—so oft it's been rehearsed.

But there's one theme where he can charm completely,
One winning strain we wish might never end;
His golden shell can never clash so sweetly,
As when he celebrates a loving friend.

Maecenas! Vergil! how the recollection
Brightens to hear the ardent numbers roll!
From stiff Alcaics breathes what fond affection
To warm the wintry cockles of the soul!

Then taught by him, my Muse, be wise in season,
Nor trim thy tiny sail o'er mighty seas.
Content, let others spread the feast of reason;
Thou only in the flow of soul canst please.

Let others praise our { Artist / Scholar / Lawyer / Statesman / Author / Teacher } For { Honor / Wisdom / Foresight / Learning / Art }

Sing thou of Johnny Doe (God bless the creature!)
The Other Half of each good fellow's Heart.

III

A BOOK OF HORACE'S SWEETHEARTS

BALLADE OF HORACE'S LOVES

Lydia, fickle and fair,
  Lyce, the faded of hue,
Lalage, Pholoë . . . there!
  Hark how the l's ripple through.
  These were the beauties that drew,
These lilting and lyrical dames!
  Leuconoë, Glycera . . . Pooh!
Why, Horace, they're nothing but names!

Pyrrha, the golden of hair,
  Lyde the lyrist, the shrew
Myrtale . . . well, I declare!
  What in the world shall we do,
  If critics abolish the crew,
Their gallants and gaddings and games?
  Barine, Lycoris, adieu!
Alas! ye are nothing but names.

All were but syllabled air,
  Fancies that flickered and flew:
Innocent Phidyle's prayer,
  Chloe the fawn, and the few

Years that your Cinara knew,
Cinara, sweetest of flames!
Ah! Horace, I'm sorry for you!
Alas! they were nothing but names.

Envoi

Ladies! ye shrink from this view;
But soon all your loves and your fames,
Fun, frailties, frolics,—ye too,
Alas! will be nothing but names!

OF LALAGE

THAT SHE KEEPS HIS HEART PURE

Integer vitae.—I.22

He needs no Moorish dart
Who wanders pure in heart,
Whose life is unimpaired, unstained by crime;
He bears no bow, no quiver's load
Of poisoned arrows on his road,
O Fuscus, though he seek the wildest clime:

Whether on Afric seas
He take the sweltering breeze;
Or frore, unfriendly peaks Caucasian scale;
Or journey by the distant waves
Where unexplored Hydaspes laves
His shores, renowned in many an ancient tale.

For wandering care-free,
Singing my Lalage,

In Sabine woods beyond my bounds I strayed;
Such virtue dwelleth in that song
To banish aught impure or wrong,
A grisly wolf that met me fled afraid.

Such fearsome monster ne'er
The spreading oak-groves bare,
Where Daunus ruled his warlike folk of old;
Nor yet, where Juba held command,
Sprang ever such from Afric sand,
Parched nourisher of lions fierce and bold.

O place me in the zone
Where Winter rules alone,
And sluggish breezes wake to life no flower;
Where evil mists forever bide,
And o'er the earth's deserted side
The Jove of tempest wills that storm-wrack lower;

Or set me where the sun
His car too near doth run
To scorchèd lands, where homes may never be:
Whate'er the sky may be above,
With heart unstained I still shall love
Sweet-smiling and sweet-prattling Lalage.

TO LYDIA

ON SPOILING SYBARIS

Lydia, dic.—I.8

Say, Lydia, I entreat by all the gods above,
Why haste you to destroy fond Sybaris with love?
Why shuns he now the plain, the dust and heat once borne?

With all his peers a-horse, what cause can make him scorn
To stride the Gallic steed, straining the fangèd bit?
Fears he the tawny Tiber who erst rejoiced in it?
Why dreads he olive oil as though 't were viper's gore,
Nor practice arms, who shone pre-eminent before
In hurling o'er the mark discus and javelin?
Like sea-born Thetis' son, who, ere the entering in
Of Troy-town, sought to 'scape the Lycians' grim array
In maiden's weeds: why hides thy lover, Lydia, say!

TO PYRRHA

THAT SHE IS BUT A COQUETTE

Quis multa gracilis.—I.5

What slim youth now, bedewed with soft perfume,
On banks of roses thee caresses,
O Pyrrha, hid in some cool cavern's gloom?
For whom dost bind thy golden tresses

In graceful neatness? Ah, how oft will he
His misplaced confidence bewail,
Who, inexperienced, wonders at the sea
Aroused and darkened by the gale!

Yet thou as gold delectable dost seem
To his too easily bedazzled eyes,
Who thinks thee ever true, without a dream
That storms may take him by surprise.

Unfortunates, to whom thou, like a sea
Untried, dost yet alluring shine!
A tablet hung on Neptune's wall by me
Shows what a shipwreck late was mine.

TO LYDIA

THAT SHE IS RECONCILED

Donec gratus eram.—III.9

HORACE

While dear to thee I still remained,
Nor any other youth more favored pressed
His arms around thy gleaming neck, more blest
Than any Persian king I reigned.

LYDIA

When thou didst feel no other flame,
Nor Chloe was o'er Lydia preferred,
Not more of Roman Ilia was heard,
And Lydia was the one bright name.

HORACE

'Tis Thracian Chloe rules me now;
Sweet music she hath learned and knows the lyre
So she might live, I'd gladly mount the pyre,
Would fate but spare her to my vow.

LYDIA

A mutual love inflames me now
And Thurian Calais, born of noble sire;
Twice o'er for him I'd gladly mount the pyre,
Would fate but spare him to my vow.

HORACE

What if our old-time love returned
And joined our sundered hearts with yoke of brass?

If o'er the threshold Lydia might pass
And fair-haired Chloe thence be spurned?

LYDIA

The fairest star in all the sky
Is he; while thou art fickle; Hadria's rage
Less fell. And yet how fain would I engage
To live with thee, with thee to die!

TO LEUCONOË

THAT SHE SHOULD NOT ASK HER FATE

Tu ne quaesieris.—I.11

Seek not to learn, for thou canst never know,
How many years of life to thee or me
The gods above will grant, Leuconoë,
Nor trust what Chaldee calculations show.
Far better to endure what fates bestow,
Should they more winters give, or should this be
The last, that dashes now the Tuscan sea
Tempestuous on the cliffs with angry blow.

Be wise: draw off the wine; without delay
Proportion thy high hopes to life's brief span.
E'en while we're speaking, envious Time has gone
Beyond recall. Thine is the present day,
Grasp it, enjoy it now, nor trust the plan
Of leaving aught until the morrow's dawn.

TO CHLOE

THAT SHE HATH JILTED HIM

I

Vitas hinnuleo.—I.23

Chloe, you flee when I am nigh
Like any fearful fawn that high
  On many a mountain path has strayed
  To seek its timid dam, afraid
Of every copse it passes by.

When breezes in the bushes sigh,
Or lizards brush the brambles dry,
  How it startles!—so, dismayed,
    Chloe, you flee.

A tiger well might terrify;
No leonine intent have I.
  No longer ask your mother's aid,
  A husband soon must be obeyed;
The time is ripe. O tell me why,
    Chloe, you flee!

II

Vixi puellis.—III.26

That late I loved I do repent;
To maids no more bellipotent,
  I now from arms and lyre abstain;
  The leftward wall of Venus' fane
Shall hold the amorous armament.

Here lie the bars, the flambeaux spent,
The pliant bows that once I bent
  Against the gates of her disdain
    That late I loved.

Imperial queen, that dost frequent
Cyprus, and Memphis innocent
  Of Scythian snows, a boon I'd gain:
  Raise once thy lash with might and main
And smite that Chloe (impudent!)
    That late I loved.

TO LYDIA

THAT SHE PRAISE NOT HIS RIVAL

Cum tu, Lydia.—I.13

When you to Telephus devote,
  O Lydia, your choicest phrases,
And either Telephus' white throat
  Or wax-like arms excite your praises,
Bah! my disgusted anger surges
Like waves which stormy Notus urges.

Then I am blinded by my wrath,
  And quite unstable my complexion;
While on my cheek a tear-stained path
  Shows how I mourn your changed affection.
For when to me you're ever lost
I burn, a lingering holocaust.

I burn to think how, mad with wine,
That boy in drunken rage may mar
With blows those gleaming arms of thine,
Or leave upon thy lips a scar.
Ah! who could that fair mouth abuse
Which Venus with all sweets endues!

O thrice and four times blessèd they
Whose life no evil quarrel knows,
But calm and peaceful day by day
Glides as a quiet river flows;
Whom an unbroken bond holds ever
Until the last sad day shall sever.

TO BARINE

THAT SHE IS A MONSTROUS LIAR

Ulla si iuris.—II.8

Barine, had there aught of harm
Befallen thee from broken vow,—
Hadst thou but lost a single charm,
Less fair become in eye or brow,—
I might believe thee now.

But thou, as soon as thou dost stake
Thy head with some perfidious prayer,
More lovely yet thy form dost make,
To all the youth a toast more rare,
Thy fatal face more fair!

Yea, by thy buried mother's shade
It only profits thee to lie;
And thou hast flouted, unafraid,
The speechless stars in all the sky,
And gods that never die.

And Venus' self at this has laughed;
The simple Nymphs will laugh, I say;
And Cupid, too, whose fiery shaft
On his blood-dripping stone alway
He whets day after day.

Add one count more: there ever grow
Still other youths, all slaves for thee!
While yet no earlier victims go,—
None from their impious mistress flee,
Whate'er their threat'nings be!

All mothers dread thee for their boys;
And old men fear thee, misers grown;
And piteous brides, on whose new joys
But once thy deadly breath has blown,
To make them all thine own.

OF MYRTALE

THAT SHE WAS EXCEEDING FIERCE

Albi, ne doleas.—I.33

Grieve not, my Albius, all too sore;
Hard-hearted Glycera forget.
To sing thy piteous lays give o'er;
Thy rival only shines the more,
And she for broken faith feels no regret.

Far-famous for her slender brow,
Lycoris' heart for Cyrus burns
With parching passion; Cyrus now
To Pholoë inclines his vow;
As sharply she his base advances spurns

As flees the flock when wolves pursue.
Thus Venus wills; her cruel joke
Doth soul to soul unlike subdue,
And lovers unrequited sue,
Unequal joined beneath her brazen yoke.

I, too, of a nobler love might tell;
She wooed me, still in tender bands
By Myrtale held; whom I loved well,
Though servile-born, and far more fell
Than billows on the curved Calabrian sands.

TO LYCE

THAT SHE IS GROWN OLD

Audivere, Lyce.—IV.13

The gods have heard, O Lyce! heard my prayer—
The gods have heard—and thou art old!
And yet thou still wouldst fain be counted fair;
With wine and laughter bold

Thy tipsy quavering voice full often seeks
By song to waken soft Desire.
But Love lurks now in Chia's tender cheeks,
Young mistress of the lyre!

Ever unsated, still Love flits away
From aged, withered oaks like thee;
No wrinkled face like thine can bid him stay
  Thy faded charms to see.

Thy Coan purple never can restore—
Nor gems of price—those days again
Which once fast-flying Time hath reckoned o'er
  In records all too plain.

Where now hath fled thy charm? thy beauty where?
Thy comely grace? What now is left
Of her—of her—who, love in every air,
  Me of myself bereft?

For—after Cinara;—fate to thee was kind:
Wide-famed, with Welcome in thy face.
But few the years the gods to her assigned;
  Yet kept thee in thy place,

To be the aged raven's withered peer,
That ardent youths may now behold
Thy burnt-out torch, and flout with many a jeer
  The ashes stale and cold.

IV

VERSIONS AND PERVERSIONS

Could Horace ever have guessed
  In even his wildest dreams,
What lot his work awaited?

Can his dust and ashes rest
  Or his soul by Lethe streams,
If he knows what has been fated?

That here, in our crude harsh tongue,—
  After two thousand years,—
Half of the world away,—

The delicate songs he had sung
  We butcher with laughter and cheers
For barbarian holiday!

MELPOMENE

Quem tu, Melpomene.—IV.3

The man thou hast inspired, Melpomene,
  And viewed at hour of birth with serene eyes,
Exalted by thy sovereign power shall be.

No Isthmian games shall hail his victory,
No fleeting chariot bear him to the prize,—
The man thou hast inspired, Melpomene.

No conqueror of haughty monarchs he;
Not he, with brows enwreathed in victors' guise,
Exalted by thy sovereign power shall be.

Where woods are dense and rills fall plenteously,
The soul of song within him glorifies
The man thou hast inspired, Melpomene.

I naught can envy; Rome has honored me.
My lays, by her deemed worthy of the skies,
Exalted by thy sovereign power shall be.

I sing to please thee, Muse, and only thee
In whom the master-gift of music lies.
Exalted by thy sovereign power shall be
The man thou hast inspired, Melpomene.

"O VIRGIN WARDER OF THE MOUNTAIN PINES"

Montium custos.—III.22

O Virgin Warder of the mountain pines!
On whom, in sorrow, matrons not in vain
Thrice call, and Thou dost quell their every pain,—
Three-fold Thy God-head shines!

Close to my roof let this Thy pine tree grow,
On which, as each revolving year is o'er,
Gladly from some fierce, sideward-thrusting boar
Blood-offering I'll bestow.

HYMN FOR FAUNUS' DAY

Faune, nympharum.—III.18

Lover of nymphs that flee for all thy love,
O Faunus, through my sunny farm-land move
With step propitious; ill intention shun
Toward my weak lambs; so when the year is run
A savory kid may deck thine ancient shrine,
And Love not lack companion-cups of wine.

Sportive the herd through the grassy meadow flees,
The ox is pastured, and the folk at ease
Maintain thy winter-festival; grown bold,
The sheep fear not the wolf within the fold;
Woods yield their boughs to grace thy holiday;
And delvers gaily stamp the hated clay.

HYMN FOR THE NEPTUNALIA

Festo quid potius.—III.28

What better do this day
Of Neptune, Lyde, say,
Than broach the cask
Of Caecuban?
Be that your task,
Go quickly as you can.

Your housewife's care forget;
The sun is nearly set.
Unlike the day
Stock-still you are;
Come, haste away,
Fetch the reluctant jar!

Green locks of Nereides,
And Neptune, Lord of Seas,
We celebrate,
And, to the lyre,
Latona great
And Cynthia's darts of fire.

To Her who Cnidos sees,
And shining Cyclades,
By yoke-swans white
Conveyed along—
To Her and Night
Shall rise our evensong.

HYMN TO DIANA AND APOLLO

Dianam tenerae.—I.21

Sing of Diana, sing, gentle maidens;
Boys, of the beardless Cynthius sing.
Chant ye together praise of Latona,
Pleasing to Jove, the omnipotent king.

Sing, O ye maidens, rivers delightful,
Tresses of woodland sweet to your queen,

Groves Erymanthian, forests of Gragus,
Dells on the slope of Algidus green.

Boys, sing of Tempe, tell of its praises;
Delos, the birth-place of Phoebus, admire;
Godlike his shoulder graced with the quiver,
Sweet the fraternal gift of the lyre.

Keep from the folk and Caesar Imperial
War's depredation, famine, and pest;
Turn them instead on the Britons and Persians;
Child of Latona, hear our request!

FONTINALIA

O fons Bandusiae.—III.13

Bandusian fountain! worthy of sweet wine
Nor lacking garlands strewn, thy glassy stream;
To-morrow from the frolic herd I deem
The tenderest kid of any shall be thine.
His pulsing blood shall tinge thy crystalline
Cold water, though by budding front he seem
Destined to wax in love and war supreme:
But vain his destiny. To weary kine
And wandering flocks thy runnel, icy cool,
Gives grateful rest when flaming Sirius reigns.
Among the founts in noble numbers known
Thou too shalt be exalted, while my strains
Extol the rills, from ledges ilex-grown,
That murmuring fill thy pure pellucid pool.

THE POET'S PRAYER

Quid dedicatum.—I.31

What seeks the bard inspired
From Phoebus on the founding of the shrine?
What is the gift desired
As from the sacred cup he pours the wine?

He asks for no rich grain
Gathered in far Sardinia's fertile fields;
From scorched Calabrian plain
No flocks; no gold nor tusks that India yields.

Unmeant for him he deems
Those lands which silent Liris gnaws away
With smoothly-sliding streams.
As for Calenian vines, let those who may

Prune them with crooked blade;
Let wealthy merchants drain from cups of gold
Wine of the Syrian trade,—
Gods willing, thrice a year in unscathed hold

Brought from the Atlantic sea.
These riches tempt me not; I but request
Olives and chicory,
And tender mallows, easy to digest.

Latona-born, I pray
That with my lot I may be satisfied;
May mind and vigor stay,
And to my age be not the lyre denied.

TO POSTUMUS

Eheu fugaces.—II.14

Quickly the seasons glide by us,
Postumus, Postumus mine.
Time never stays for the pious;
Quickly the seasons glide by us,
Wrinkles and age come to try us,
Death but awaits our decline.
Quickly the seasons glide by us,
Postumus, Postumus mine.

Every expedient faileth,
Pluto at length is supreme.
Sacrifice nothing availeth,
Every expedient faileth.
Geryon his bondage bewaileth
Held by the Stygian stream.
Every expedient faileth,
Pluto at length is supreme.

None can escape the dark water,
Peasant nor monarch of men.
Father, son, mother, and daughter,—
None can escape the dark water;
Vain to shun war with its slaughter,
Ocean, or pestilent fen.
None can escape the dark water,
Peasant nor monarch of men.

Villa and lands, we must leave them;
Children and wife must resign,

Willing or no to bereave them.
Villa and lands, we must leave them,
Worthier heirs shall receive them,
  Draining the long-treasured wine.
Villa and lands, we must leave them;
  Children and wife must resign.

A WINTER PARTY

Vides ut alta.—I.9

O yonder see how clearly gleams
  Soracte, white with snow;
How the forest labors beneath its load,
  Bowing to let it go;
And the streamlets, numbed by the piercing cold,
  At length have ceased to flow.

Dissolve the rigor of the frost,
  Bright let the embers shine,
With liberal hand heap on the logs,
  And, Thaliarchus mine,
Bring forth the Sabine amphora
  Of four-years-mellowed wine.

All else abandon to the gods;
  Whatever time they will
They drive the winds from the tossing sea
  And cause them to be still,
Till never a lowland cypress stirs
  Nor old ash on the hill.

Pry not into the morrow's store;
Thy profit doth advance
By every day that fate allots,
So, lad, improve thy chance,—
Ere stiff old age replace thy youth,—
To love and tread the dance.

Now in the Campus and the squares
At the appointed hour
Let gentle whispers oft be heard
From many a twilight bower,
Or the laugh of a lurking lass betray
The pledge of a ring or flower.

AN INVITATION

Vile potabis.—I.20

Maecenas, when you grace my board
(And don't, dear Knight, decline to favor)
You'll drink poor cups of Sabine, stored
In Grecian jar to get the flavor.

That very day the wine I sealed
When so distinct your plaudits rang out
That echoes pealed from cliff and field;
So don't neglect my humble hang-out.

Though here you'll taste no Formian vine,
No product of Calenian vat,
We'll have with just the cheap Sabine
A very creditable bat.

A PROPER FEAST

Natis in usum.—I.27

Come, comrades, cease your Thracian fights
  O'er cups designed for better uses,
For moderate Bacchus ne'er delights
  In bloody quarrels o'er his juices.

How far removed from lamps and wine
  Should be the Median dagger keen!
Hush drunken clamor, friends of mine;
  In quiet on your elbows lean.

. . . You wish to have me taste my share
  Of strong Falernian with the rest? . . .
Megilla's brother must declare
  First, by what mortal wound he's blest.

Falters his will? . . . Then I'll not drink . . .
  Come, tell us by what love you're swayed,
What fire consumed; . . . tut, man, don't shrink
  To own an honest escapade!

Trust it to safe ears; 't is no sin
  But to impart your sweetheart's name.—
Ah! What Charybdis are you in,
  Youth worthy of a nobler flame!

What witch, what wizard's potent brew,
  What god can save you this time, sirrah?
Scarce Pegasus could rescue you,
  Entrapped by such three-fold Chimera.

THE AIMS OF HUMAN KIND

Maecenas atavis.—I.1

Maecenas, sprung from royal lineage bright,
Both my protector and my dear delight,
How varied are the aims of human kind!

Some in the chariot race their pleasure find,
Tossing Olympia's dust as they skim by
The goal with flashing wheel, and onward fly;
Them the ennobling palm—to victors given—
Masters of men exalts to lords of heaven.
One, if the fickle crowd has dignified
With three-fold offices, is satisfied.
Another, if within his barns is stored
What grain the Libyan threshing-floors afford.
While he who loves to ply with his own hands
The mattock on his small, ancestral lands,
Would not, for all the wealth Attalian, be
A timid sailor on the Myrtoan sea.
The merchant, dreading much the Afric blasts
Contending with the Icarian waves, contrasts
The present peril and his quiet home;
But soon refits his bark, again to roam,
Impatient at a life of mean estate.

Others old Massic do not deprecate,
Stretched at their ease a portion of each day
'Neath arbute green, where quiet fountains play.
Many in camps and conquest find delight,
And trumpet blasts, the cause of mothers' fright.
The hunter 'neath the chilly sky will bide

Unmindful of his home and tender bride,
Whether behind the deer his hounds give tongue,
Or Marsian boar through fine-meshed net has sprung.

But none of these for ivy wreaths I'll trade,
The crown of learnèd brows; in pleasant glade
I love to view the Nymphs and Satyrs dance,
Far from the common crowd; and then perchance
Euterpe on her flute will sound a strain,
Or Polyhymnia tune the lyre again.
But if you deem me worth the lyric prize,
With head exalted I shall strike the skies.

THE CAMPAIGNER

Icci, beatis.—I.29

O Dicky, is it only spite
  And hope of Spanish plunder?
Or are you spoiling for a fight
With those bewhiskered sons of might,
  The dauntless Dons, I wonder?

Caramba! but some heads will ache
  When you consume salt-petre!
You'll shoot some Dago dude and take—
To starch your cuffs and cocktails make—
  His dusky Señorita.

Or else, for valet, you'll bring home
  Some coffee-colored laddie,

Well trained to spread the fleecy foam,
To wield the strop, to ply the comb,
  By his Castilian daddy.

Well, well, what next? What can't be true,
  If you, who'd grown so steady,
Have caught the Cuban fever, too,
And start, all fired for daring-do,
  Rough-Ridering with Teddy;

If you, a settled, sober Grad.,
  Have hocked your KENT and STORY,
Your BLACKSTONE—lately all your fad—
To buy your kit, and khaki-clad
  Are off for dust and glory?

TO VERGIL

Iam veris comites.—IV.12

Now blow the Thracian breezes, Spring's companions,
That soothe the seas and waft the vessels onward;
No longer meads are frost-bound, nor the rivers
  Roar with the swelling from wintry snow-drifts.

Now nests the luckless bird, lamenting sorely
Her Itys—she, of the old house of Cecrops
Eternal shame! For there she wrought foul vengeance,
  Barbarous lust of the kings requiting.

Now in the tender grass the flocks are feeding,
Their guardian shepherds piping songs of springtime

To joy the god to whom the flocks are pleasing,
Lover of dusky Arcadian ridges.

The thirsty hours have come apace, my Vergil;
If thou wouldst quaff the juice trod out at Cales,
Then buy the wine, O client of young nobles!
Paying rich price of Orient perfume.

An onyx vase of nard will lure a wine-jar
Now slumbering in the storehouse of Sulpitius,
Endued with power to build thy hopes more largely,
Driving away all thy bitter sorrows.

If joys like these thou art in haste to welcome,
Come swiftly with thy merchandise. I plan not
That thou shouldst bring no share, yet drain my goblets,
Deeming me rich and housed in fulness.

So cast aside delay and zeal for riches,
Remembering how death's gloomy fires await us.
And while thou mayst, mix folly with thy wisdom.
Sweet is it sometimes to play the witling.

SIMPLICITY

Persicos odi.—I.38

Hateful, Page, to me is the pomp of Persia;
Garlands even, plaited with bast, displease me;
Cease then seeking places wherein the roses
Linger late-blooming.

Naught I will thou add to the simple myrtle,
Vainly toilsome; neither for thee, my servant,
Myrtles are unfitting, or me close-shaded,
Quaffing the vine-juice.

MY SABINE FARM

Laudabunt alii.—I.7

Some people talk about "Noo Yo'k";
Of Cleveland many ne'er have done;
They sing galore of Baltimore,
Chicago, Pittsburgh, Washington.

Others unasked their wit have tasked
To sound unending praise of Boston—
Of bean-vines found for miles around
And crooked streets that I get lost on.

Give me no jar of truck or car,
No city smoke and noise of mills;
Rather the slow Connecticut's flow
And sunny orchards on the hills.

There like the haze of summer days
Before the wind flee care and sorrow.
In sure content each day is spent,
Unheeding what may come to-morrow.

TO CHLOE

A BALLAD OF CLASS-ROOM PRONUNCIATIONS

The snow descends on hills and leas,
But radiators brightly glowing

Dispel all fear of chill Boreas,
  However hard the wind is blowing.
While old Aeólus wafts the snow,
I'll sit me down and write to Chloe.

With Horace Chloe was all the rage,
  He straightway jilted every other,
Leuconoe, Phyllis, and Lalage,
  For this "lost fawn that seeks its mother;"
Which was his artful way, I fear,
Of calling Chloe his little dear.

'Tis true I never knew this Chloe,
  But Mr. Q. H. Flaccus knew her;
She handed him the mitten, so
  He straightway wrote some poems to her.
Well, let me see, I'll head my verse:
"To one more charming far than Circe."

"It is for you my spirit gasps,
  O loveliest of lovely gender;
I willingly would breast Hydaspes,
  If I might be your true defender.
I long for you, to be precise,
As Orpheus yearned for Eurydice.

"And you will not refuse, I hope
  To send me just as many kisses,
As that old dame called Penelope
  Bestowed upon returned Ulysses
Or Cupid, whom all lovers like,
Delivered to his sweetheart, Psyche.

"Within affection's warmest glow
I write these heartfelt lines to place us,
And send them to you, darling Chloe,
By kindness of my friend, Pegasus.
O may love's bond as firm attach us,
As Ariadne was to Bacchus."

THE DEATH OF CLEOPATRA

Nunc est bibendum.—I.37

Ho! comrades, let us revel, now dance with nimble feet,
Come, spread the couches of the gods with Salian dainties sweet;
But yesterday 't were ill conceived the long-stored wine to drain
While Capitol and Empire still were menaced by the train
Of dissolute adventurers who follow Egypt's queen,
Drunk with the vintage of success and blinded by her spleen.
But her madness was diminished, when from out the fire and wrack
Of all her myriad galleys, scarce a single ship went back.
When Caesar from the Italian shore in quick pursuit had sped,
Her senses, dulled by fumes of wine, were overcome by dread.
For as upon the dove swoops down the falcon from the air,
Or as on Haemon's snowy plain the huntsman bags the hare,
So Caesar in his galleys to the fatal queen gave chase,
To cast in chains and bear her back his captive train to grace.
But destined for a nobler end she showed no woman's fear

Of swords, nor did she take to ship and for a refuge steer;
But all serene, she gazed upon her palace lying low,
And dared to seek the venom from the serpent's angry blow.
She was no humble woman, who could death so firmly brave,
And scorn to grace a triumph fit for any common slave.

V

FLACCUS DIVERSIFIED

OR

EVERY POET HIS OWN HORACE

"He useth to indite but Common Places—*quasi Communes Locos*—this Barde of ours: wherefore it Falleth oute that what Poet soever looketh into Flaccus his boke heareth but his own Argument sette to his own proper Musick."

—Meason: Anatomie of Poeticks, §23

DONAREM PATERAS

IV.8

Englished by Robert Browning

Flaccus the poet, from the ilex groves
That clothe the cool Digentia's dexter side—
(See Life, by Wickham, three-and-thirtieth page)—
And the sure silence of his field's much grass,
To Censorinus, best of comrades, these:

'Thinketh he'd suit each several comrade's taste,
'Thinketh he'd give them sacrificial bowls
All lapis, or enwrought of Favrile glass,
(Although, God wot! I know not what that is!)
And suchlike bric-a-brac, wherewith we use
To burden bridal couples to their dole;

And bronzes—mark you that, pure bronzes, man!
Ripe-orange patined, copper's best alloy,
No piddling pewter, two per cent. of tin;
And triple-straddling tripods, valor's prize.
Flower-o'-the-plum!
This is as easy as twiddle-your-thumb!

Nor would'st thou have the worst of these my gifts,
My Censorinus!—'meaneth to say, of course,
I'd give them, had I store of such to give,—
Chefs-d'oeuvre Parrhasian, Scopian handiwork,
(This stone's, and that the glittering pigment's lord,
One sculping mortals and one limning gods.)
Flower-o'-the-thyme!
This is too easy: I think I'll try rhyme.

But seeing to you there no lack is
Of such, you'll not hope that your Flaccus
Will send you *bijouterie;* moreover,
'Tis poems you rather had pore over;
'Tis poems I have in satiety,
And can tell their worth to society:
Not marbles nor state-graven statues;
(And what you will make out of that choose)
Through which our brave general's spirit
(Praise a hero: be sure he will hear it!)
Returns to this life for a season,—
Not the backward path that he flees on,
Dire Hannibal, threat'nings all ended,—
Nor Carthage, forever delend'ed,—
More clearly reveals by its blazes
The conquering hero's just praises,
Who returned from his African triumph

So poor that no carper would cry: "Humph!
His reason for fighting's the plainest,"
(So poor! but be-Africanused!)—
Than Muses Calabrian show 'em;
That's Ennius; go read his poem.
Flower-o'-the-bay!
What's to prevent me from rhyming all day?

Were letters silent of thy deeds well done,
Thou hadst no guerdon. What were Mars' son
And Ilia's, if that Silence envious
Might stand athwart the worth of Romulus?
Thus Aeacus from Stygian billows wrung
By potency of bards, their favor, tongue,
Is consecrate the Happy Isles among.
The wight laud-worthy hath the Muse denied
To die; the Muse awards him Heaven beside.
'Tis thus at Jove's high feast, his labor crowned,
The tireless hero Hercules is found;
And Tyndareus' progeny, the lucent stars,
Save shattered barks from out the billows' wars;
With wreathed brow whereon the vine-leaf clings,
Liber our hope to happy issue brings.
Flower-o'-the-vine!
Is some of that Browning's or all of it mine?

VITAS HINNULEO

I.23

Indited by Samuel Johnson, Esq.

With heart horrescent and aversive Air,
My amorous suit evites the ingenuous Fair,—

A timid offspring of the cervine kind,
Who seeks her Dam of equi-timorous mind;
She devious quests o'er elevated ways;
Each gust affrights her and each breath affrays.

If vernal Zephyrs on the branches light
And shake the leaves (in Dr. Bentley's spite);
If Briars recumbrous on their native heath
Stir with lacertian movement underneath;
The flames of terror in her bosom burn,
And nether members pulsate in their turn.

And yet no tigrine nature e'er was mine,
No shore Gaetulian reared me leonine.
I woo thee, not insatiate of gore,
Nor long to view thy corse ensanguined o'er.
Seek not the Maternal Source of life again,
Nor still reluct t'approve the eager Swain.

VIXI PUELLIS

III.26

Lilted by Algernon Charles Swinburne

Love, I have lived of late for these thy handmaids not all unmeet.
Yea, I have warred thy war, nor bitten the bitter bread of defeat.
Cometh war-weariness now and the woful wane of wild desire,
Cometh the leaving of arms, and the last long lingering lift of the lyre.

Fair is thy fane, Aphrodite, thou fairest fruit of the furrowless sea!
Yea, and the left wall of it shall hold henceforth the weapons of me:
Torches of fresh-flown flame, and jimmies that jam, and the bent bow's bane,
On lintels that lower with locks shall prove their prowess never again.

Goddess, who holdest Cyprian realms! thou brine-born Mother of Love!
Whose alone are the Memphian fields and the snowless acres thereof!
Queen, and the flower of the foam! thou flicker of flames that flash!
Lift up thy scourge on the scornful Chloe and lessen her pride with thy lash!

CAELO SUPINAS

III.23

In the manner of Robert Herrick

Whenas the New Moone sho's her light,
If thou dost lift thy hands aright
(Rusticall Phidyle) to Heav'n's dome,
And of thine increase still spar'st some
For the high gods ('t needs not be bigge:
A wisp of corne, a sucking Pigge,
Or but a grane of Franckynsense),
Then all thy plagues theyle banish hence.
The Sirrock-blast from Africa

Wo'd not thy fertile Vine dismay;
Thy croppe won't rust, nor younglings fear
The evill apple-season o' th' yeere.
For those rich victims that still wait
(Tho' vow'd) on Algidus candidate,
Or fatte in Alban pastures waxe,
Will dye (not thine but) the pontiff's axe.
Thy tiny gods to supplicate
Befits no such lautitious cate;
For rosemarie wreathes & mirtle boughs
Co'd better suite thy modest vows;
I, holy meale & crackling grane
Wo'd soothe the angry Lar. In vain
A costlier Gift thou'd'st seek to bring:
Pure hands are th' welcomest offering.
These sooner make thy cause well wonne
Than rich importunation.

NON USITATA

II.20

Which Chaucer thinketh grete merveille.

With wingës freshe and stronge I tak my weye
Thurgh clerë heven, ne lenger nill I staye
On erthë for to dwelle in cityes grete;
Sone I schal flee the presse, I yow bihete.
But I, Maecenas, I whom thou dost calle
A pore man born, shal never deye at alle,
Ne rest confinëd bi the Stygian wawes.
For, lo, my toon been chaungëd into clawes,
And smalë scalës on my leggës bothe

Beginnen for to growe, I tell yow sothe;
The whitë down out-sterteth fro my barme,
And plumës been engendred on eche arme;
My bak and sidës eek with fethres hid—
Loke, am I nat a veray parfit brid!
Anon like Icarus on-lofte I sore
To seigh the gretë see y-clept Bosphore,
And like a snow-whyt swan with swetë stevene
I flee to Syrtes heigh along the hevene;
To Colchus, Spayne, and many landës mo,
And eek to rëaumës of the north I go
And drink the Rhone, yif that there nis no wine.
Wherefore, when I departë, leve to pyne;
Noon needeth sorwen at my sepulture,
Ne singen diriges to my soulës cure,
Ne seyen messe upon an holi-daye
As monkës doon for love or els for paye,
Swich wo and moorning nis nat worth a flye,—
I shal for ever sore on wingës hye.
. . . . . .
Thus seyth Orace, and nevere have I founde
Within his book that yit he cam to grounde.

SCRIBERIS VARIO

I.6

To M. Vipsanius Agrippa
By R. K., Author of Bobbs

If it's pr'ises that you'd like,
Mister Gripps,
Varius is the bird to strike

For them, Gripps.
'E'll cough up 'Omeric notes
About your deeds with 'orse or boats.
S'ikes! your Tommies harn't no goats,
Hare they, Gripps?

I can't write no bloody hode
For you, Gripps.
Can't tell wot I 'aven't knowed,
Can I, Gripps?
Like them bloomin' classic guys,
Pelides and Ulix-eyes;—
You're a cut above my size,
Haren't you, Gripps?

Wisht I could spout such 'ot stuff
About you, Gripps.
Reckon I 'aven't sand enough,—
Not like Gripps.
And my Muse, says she (bad cess!)
"That there's not your style, I guess;
Don't you make no *pukkah* mess
Out o' Gripps."

Beer and rookies, them's my l'y—
(Likewise Gripps')—
Quarreling gals and such as th'y;
Haren't they, Gripps?
That's the stuff brings in the chink
And I'll stick to that I think,
Woozely drunk, or out o' clink,
Won't I, Gripps?

CHORUS

Then 'ere's to Vipsy-Wipsy, little Gripps,
Gripps, Gripps!
We love him str'ight or tipsy, little Gripps,
Gripps, Gripps!
O! we knows it bloomin' well,
His grite fime no tongue can tell;
But we'll fight for him to 'Ades!
Won't we Gripps! *

O NAVIS

I.14

Navigated by W. E. Henley

Whither, O Ship, away?
Forth to the plangent, immitigable billows
Wilt thou fare once more?
To port! To port! Lo!
How nude thy side of oarage, how thy mast
Wind-worn, worm-riddled, mouldy with memories,
Groans to the swift blasts African.
And all thy yards with clang on clang resound.
Nor without cables can thy keel endure
This miserable welter and wash,
The hugger-mugger of waves.
(Ocean! O Ocean of Politics! Ocean of Pulls!)
Thou hast no sails yet undisintegrated,
Nor Powers on whom to call, o'er-whelmed with ills,
Child of the Pontic Pine,
Daughter of noble wood-lands!

* See page 86.

Thy boasts are vain;
The mariner trusts thee not;
Beware, unless thou owest sport
To all the winds of Heaven.
Thou my anguishable care
In the dreary, ineffectual Yesterdays
Now my darling anxiety:
Beware lest Death, the junk-man,
Catch thee amid the sapphirine isles,
And strew thee in gobbets o'er
The unravined, imperturbable sea.

EHEU' FUGACES

II.14

As it sounded to Thomas Gray

Our Fleeting Years, alas! glide fast away.
Gray, wrinkled Age invades with every breath;
Nor Pious Vows can interpose delay,
And even Worth must yield the Palm to Death.

Can reeking Fane or oft-recurring Rite
Avail thee, Friend, in thy predestined hour,
When all the monstrous brood of ancient Night
Alike must own the illacrimable Power?

Full many a child of the all-bounteous earth
O'er Lethe's dark, unfathomed wave has passed;
Nor pride of Power avails, nor Royal Birth;
The weary Ploughman thither plods at last.

In vain we shun the blood-stained work of War;
  In vain th' infuriate Ocean's angry moan;
In vain from Autumn's heat we flee afar;
  For Pestilence will mark us for her own.

To view that sullen flood none may refuse,
  Where spirits unblest will fright thy wondering gaze,
Where Justice still her righteous doom pursues,
  And keeps the awful tenor of her ways.

No more thy child shall prattle at thy knees,
  Nor busy house-wife wait thy long return.
Thy land, thy house, thou 'lt leave; and of thy trees
  Naught but the hated cypress deck thy urn.

A worthier heir shall spill thy treasured wine
  That Luxury's self had envied thee to taste;
Then Wealth shall all her hoarded hopes resign,
  And Avarice sadly yield the realm to Waste.

VITAS HINNULEO

I.23

Done by Mr. William Wordsworth

I met a little Roman maid;
  She was just sixteen (she said),
And O! but she was sore afraid,
  And hung her modest head.

A little fawn, you would have vowed,
That sought her mother's side,
And wandered lonely as a cloud
Upon the mountain wide.

Whene'er the little lizards stirred,
She started in her fear;
In every rustling bush she heard
Some awful monster near.

"I'm not a lion; fear not so;
Seek not your timid dam."—
But Chloe was afraid, and O!
She knows not what I am:

A creature quite too bright and good
To be so much misunderstood!

IN MEMORIAM

Quintilius Varus
I.24
By Alfred Tennyson

May grief's excess work aught of wrong
To one so dear as him we mourn?
O music, from some Higher Bourne
Attune our woe to lyre and song!

And so eternal slumbers press
Our brother down: and when shall we
Among mankind his equal see
In justice, honor, truthfulness?

By many wailed, by thee the most,
O Vergil! Vain thy pious prayer.
What erst they trusted to thy care,
The gods recall, and it is lost.

What though with more than Orphic strain
Thy lyre should charm the listening trees?
May spirit hark to words like these,
Or fill the empty form again?

In vain. To that austere abode
Relentless Fate his soul hath driven,
Deaf to our prayers. May only Heaven
Grant patience to endure thy load!

EPISTLE TO SEPTIMIUS

Septimi, Gadis.—II.6

As writ by Mr. Alexander Pope, Esqr.

Awake, Septimius! to my strain attend:
Friendship my theme, I sing to thee a friend.
That such thou art, thy fond attendance proves
Where'er on earth my errant foot-step roves.
To Cadiz if I take my dangerous way
And tribes Cantabrian, hostile to our sway;
Or if the barbarous Syrtes I explore
Where seething waves assail the Afric shore:
Not these can daunt, nor those subdue thy mind,
Nor seas divide the hearts that Heaven joined.
O grant, ye Powers, that still my wand'rings guide,
And this the best of gifts—a friend—supplied:
When draws this mortal journey to its close,

May we in Tibur find a sweet repose!
Within the walls an Argive wanderer piled,
May we forget the painful roads we toiled!
With warfare wasted, sickened by the sea,
Be ours the goal for which we fondly pray!
Some further limit for my travel's end,
If Fate decree (who can with Fate contend?)
That land I'll seek where once Phalanthus came,
Where Spartans dwell beside Galaesus' stream.
Harmonious through the plain its currents glide,
Sweet to the flocks that pasture by its side.
No other flocks more feel a shepherd's care,
No other shepherds richer fleeces shear.
(Thrice-happy swains! if they their riches knew!
To skin their flocks, and then to fleece them too!)
No other nook on earth with this can vie
To win the poet's heart and please his eye.
No more Hymettus boasts her waxen store;
Venafrum's olives are her pride no more.
For here kind Jove a rich abundance brings,
The winter softens, and delays the springs.
And blest by Bacchus, Aulon's fertile field
Envies no grapes Falernian vineyards yield.
Sure 't is for us those happy towers arise
To soothe our breasts and glad our weary eyes.
And there the poet with the poet's friend
Awaits at last the final journey's end.
Thy grateful task to ease the laboring breath,
To still his fears and close his eyes in death,
On his warm ashes drop the meed of tears,
And waft his spirit to those brighter spheres.

TO DELLIUS

Aequam memento.—II.3

Rubaiyated by Edward FitzGerald

This shifting bubble sages call thy soul
Wilt thou not keep it, Friend, in firm control?
Nor Joy nor Grief o'er-throws his level mind
Who learns the Wisdom hidden in the Bowl.

Whether thou pass thy gloomy days in pain,
Or fling the Balm-of-life abroad like rain,
Alike the bitter or the sparkling Cup
Thou quaff'st—to sleep and wake no more again.

I sometimes think that never flows the Wine
So red, as 'neath the Poplar and the Pine.
Wer't not a shame? O Friend, wer't not a shame,
If they in vain their pleasing shade combine?

And to what end, think'st thou, this rivulet
Doth in its winding Channel fume and fret?
O pluck To-day! and make no vain pursuit
Of This and That, which thou may'st never get.

The Wine, the Perfume, and the lovely Rose
That buds at dawn and with the evening goes,—
That man whom Wealth permits, and Youth and Fate,
He knows about them all—He knows—He knows!

The aureate earth thou sett'st thy Heart upon,
The River-gardens thy heaped treasure won,—
All must thou leave; nor cares the heir one jot
For all thy toil and thee, once thou art gone.

Though Kaikobad the Great thy sires begot,
Or thou art beggar's spawn,—it matters not.
The Potter molded from the same red clay
And at his pleasure shatters every pot.

All to the one dark realm are we addresst;
On every brow one fatal sign is prest;
When nods the dark Ferrash, the caravan
Moves to the dusty desert,—and we rest.

VI

FLY-LEAVES AND DEDICATIONS

TO OUR BEST THIRD

L. F. W.

Had he seen you, a higher grace
His curious art had striven to trace;
More winning would the portrait stand
Than Hypermnestra, faithless-grand,
Or Phidyle, whom no years erase.

What tenderer lines would there find place,
Had not the gods a Wife's embrace,
A Mother's yearning, from him banned,—
Had he seen you!

Had he but known your mild command,
Your self-less love, he had not planned
His Myrtale harsh, Barine base,
Nor mocked at Lyce's once-loved face;
What we two know, he'd understand,
Had he seen you!

TO IRVING BERDINE RICHMAN

When once in Rome long, long ago
A poet bade his booklet go
And greet a friend, whose learned page
The world would read for many an age,
He warned it: "See thou choose a time
Befitting mirth and trifling rhyme.—
The lamp-lit hour, when red wine flows,
When perfumes drip, when reigns the rose.
Then even Catos may relent,
And tolerate thy merriment."
So, Irving, though I'd not aspire
To Martial's grace and wit and fire,
To you who play a Pliny's part,—
Versed in no unlaborious art
Nor less than he a faithful friend,—
It is to you these rhymes I send.
Would they were not so far below
His merit to whose house they go!

If e'er you tire of dates and names,
Of weighing deeds and sifting blames,—
When old *Rhode Island* charms no more
And *California* grows a bore,—
Whene'er your thoughts no more can stray
From *Iowa* to *Ioway*,—
Then is the proper time to look
At this, your school-mate's frivolous book;
In lounging chair and slippered ease
Laugh with, or at, such lines as these.
And I am sure you'll stay awake
To read them through for old sake's sake.

TO GILBERT MURRAY

(After his lectures on Greek Religion)

To translate Horace! And to send the verse
For Murray's eyes! What folly could be worse?
If one before such Presences may come,
Should Littleness not tremble and be dumb?

Nay, I can face them. Though the tiniest spark
Be mine to glow amid the encircling dark,
True to its ether-home it still aspires
And claims its kinship with those Greater Fires.

Like the poor votary of that buried faith
Who shrank to meet the Lords of Life and Death,
Yet bore within his hand on graven gold
A charm to make his very weakness bold,—

I too, the very least of them that sing,
Return this answer to their challenging:
"O Mighty Ones! I know you who ye are;
But lo! I also am a Wandering Star."

IUCUNDO AMICO

"Nil ego contulerim iucundo sanus amico."
(To B. B. D.)

A sane, strong heart; a wise and mellow mind;
  A soul that keeps its level poise;
Smiling content; and with them all combined
  A vital love for homely country joys:

How Horace would delight to find a steadfast friend
Like her to whom these echoes of himself I send.

You need no verse of mine to show his merits,
His life, his work, his art who know so well;
But could I write the dialect of spirits
And publish in Elysium where they dwell,
It were indeed a well-rewarded task, by Bacchus!
To translate Davis for the benefit of Flaccus.

FOR A DAUGHTER OF MARTHA

(To A. B. H.)

My friend, if you were able for a while
This age and all its challenge to forget,—
Its Wealth, its Creeds, its Poverty, its Style,
Child-Welfare, Fireless-Cooker, La Follette,*
And what we have, and what we can not get,—

Then might this book a leisure hour beguile,
Wherein, despite my inexperienced file,
Some traces of his charm must linger yet
Who drew his own day with a candid art,—
Its folly and its fever and its fret.

O! read with me that not unkindly page,
And taste the mellow wisdom of his heart.
He'll greet us both with an impartial smile,—
Two phantoms whirled through this bewildered age,—
The dour Old Fogey and the ardent Suffragette.

* See page 86.

OUR ADVANTAGE

(To H. O. T.)

Let Horace sing his Sabine joys,—
  His sunny farm and its delight,
Freedom from smoke and wealth and noise,
  Rome's frantic life: the lucky wight!

Yet while behind Maromas' hills
  We watch the westering star grow dim,
Or hear the twilight whip-poor-wills,
  What need have we to envy him?

Our peaceful Haddam vale is no less fair to view,
Where we lead Simple Lives, and read our Horace too!

TEMPORE SUO

(*To M. T. W.*)

When is the properest time to read
  Verses that please with a Sabine flavor?
Not on a Monday, O! take good heed!
  Tuesday or Wednesday? Ah! no indeed.
Thursday or Friday can find no favor.

Those all are days when the TRISEME stalks;
  GREATER ALCAICS roar loud for prey;
Outraged the ghost of MAECENAS walks;
  Shrill the HINDSANDNOBLE squawks;
Visions depart and loathings stay.

Wait for the bliss of a Saturday night;
Far in the rear is the PROGRAM'S power.
Roll out the easy-chair, trim the light;
Bubble, O tea-kettle! Fire, burn bright.
Hey now for Lalage! This is her hour.

IN EXILE

To E. M. from Maine.

O sweet to hear when Horace sings
Of olive or late lingering rose,
The lonely ilex tree that springs
Where the clear murmuring fountain flows,—
To hear in fancy through his Sabine vales
The immortal music of the nightingales.

But dearer to your heart and mine
The winds that whisper of the snow,
The granite slopes of fir and pine
Where bloodroot and arbutus grow;
Far clearer, o'er the keen New England hills,
Speak to our dreams the yearning whippoorwills.

EPILOGUE

No rest we find on swift Homeric seas,
No peace where Vergil yearns, no hope where moan
The Argive choruses for kings o'erthrown
In fated strife with fate. O Sophocles,
O Dante, writhing in white agonies,
Your cup of anguish must we make our own?

O Milton, cease thy thunderous antiphone.
Ye bring us pain; who can afford us ease?

Comes the enchanter with Digentian wand,
Not with a soul apart nor bosom steeled;
He smiled upon the world, and smiling, healed;
Singing to his companions, few and fond,
Familiar joys of fireside and of field—
Ah me, that men should seek for aught beyond.

VII

VERGILIANA

THE MISSION OF ROME

Others,—I well may believe it,—the breathing bronzes will fashion
Fairer than thou, or will loosen the living face from the marble;
Plead as advocates better, and over the orbits of heaven
Stretch forth the measuring rod and number the stars of the morning.

Thou, O Roman, be mindful to rule with thine empire the nations;
This sole art shall be thine, and the usage of peace to establish,
Sparing the conquered foe and vanquishing still the defiant.

"O LITTLE VILLA"

O little villa, with the tiny field,
Poor acres, once my Siro called his own,—
Yet all the scanty harvest thou didst yield
Was wealth to such a lord!—to thee alone
Myself do I commend, with those most dear,
Whom I have ever loved; and first of all
My father,—if still sadder news I hear,
Ill-chances that our native land befall.

In thee hereafter shall he see, content,
What Mantua once to him, and once Cremona meant.

Catalepton VIII.

FAREWELL TO SCHOOL DAYS

Go hence! go hence! ye jugs of empty speech!
Mere words, and swollen by no Attic dew!
Ye greasy tribe, too fat of wit to teach!
Silius, Tarquitius, yes, and Varro too,
Ye tinkling cymbals of a youth now past!
And thou, chief care of my most careful heart,
Sextus Sabinus, now farewell at last!
Farewell, too, goodly school-mates; we must part.

For I am sailing with a joyous mind,
Trimming my sails to reach the blessed shore,
Where all the cares of life are left behind
When I attain to learnèd Siro's lore.
Ye, too, must hence, O muses,—yes, ye too,
Sweet Muses! For most sweet ye were, I ween.
Yet to my pages come betimes, though few
Your modest visits be, and far between.

Catalepton V.

GARDEN VERSES

Priapus Speaks

I

Roses crown me in springtime; apples in autumn; in summer
Wheat in the ear; alone winter to me is a plague.

Cold is my only dread; for I fear, lest to ignorant farmers,
I, here a wooden god, seem but a food for the fire.

2

Behold me, Passer-by, a withered poplar brand,
Me who was shaped a god by some skilled rustic hand.
'Tis I who watch this tiny little field, you see
Before you on the left; and here in front of me
The modest cottage and the scanty garden-farm
I keep from thieves and guard from every harm.

To me is given a garland painted by the spring;
To me the rust-red wheat that scorching summers bring;
To me the luscious grapes that lusty vinestocks hold;
To me is given the olive chilled by winter's cold.

Mine are the pastures whence the dainty she-goat bears
Her udders swelled with milk, when city-ward she fares.
Mine is the fatted lamb that leaves the sheltering fold
Homeward to send the owner's hand weighed down with gold.
And while her mother lows, the tender calf outpours
Her life blood to the gods before the temple doors.

Then, Passer-by, regard my deity with fear,
And hold your hands aloft, for that will profit here.
For lo! to punish theft fit instrument is nigh.
"By Pollux, I would like," . . . you say? By Pollux, fly!
The Steward comes! With brawny hands he breaks my wood
And with the cudgel thwacks you as a steward should.

3

O youths, this farm, this cottage by the marish edge
With willow withies thatched and scanty wisps of sedge,

I cherish,—I, dry oak hewn by some rustic ax;
And year by happy year, behold! its fortunes wax.
For both this poor hut's masters, sire and stripling son,
Call me a god, and reverence due to me is done.
One with unflagging carefulness attends my needs,
And frees my little shrine from bramble-brush and weeds.
The other's generous hands a modest offering bring.

Gay garlands crown my head when comes the flowery spring;
The firstling wheat-ear that the pliant stalks produce;
The yellow violet; the poppy's milky juice;
Sweet-smelling apples and pale melons here are laid,
With grapes red-ripe, grown mid the clustering vine-leaves' shade.
Even on my weapons—do not tell!—a bloody stain
Falls from a bearded kid or horn-hoofed she-goat slain.

For all these gifts Priapus makes requital due,
Watching the little-garden plot, the vineyard too.
Wherefore go hence, my lads; no thieving from this yard!
Our neighbor close at hand is rich, and has no guard;
For his Priapus is a careless god and slack.
Take thence whate'er ye will. Just follow up this track!

VIGNETTES

The Cotter's Winter Night

And one I know, deep in the wintry night,
Will hold his vigil by the ingle light,
Pointing new torches with his keen-edged knife,
His long toil solaced by his singing wife.
Swift flies her busy shuttle through the loom,

And with its clatter fills the tiny room;
Or else sweet juices, by the fire-god's aid,
She slowly boils until the must is made.
Careful she watches while the flame grows hot,
And skims with frequent leaves the boiling pot.

Georgics I. 291–296.

LAD'S LOVE

In our own garden-close I first saw thee,
A little maiden by thy mother's side,
Plucking the dewy apples from the tree;
A slender lad myself, I was your guide.
To my eleventh year one summer-tide
The more had just been added in its round;
Well I remember how it was my pride
To reach the fragile branches from the ground.

And as I looked, I perished. Luckless day!
When from myself myself was stolen away!

Eclogue VIII, 37–41.

THE DYING OX

Lo! how the ox beneath the plowshare's load
Pants forth his life unheeding of the goad.
With bloody foam his dying muzzle drips,
And the last groan escapes his fainting lips.
Then from the brother ox, that mourns his fate,
The grieving hind unyokes the heavy weight,
And in the very furrow that it cleft
The plowshare fixed and useless now is left.

No longer will the tall and shady grove
Nor the soft pasture-lands his spirit move,
Nor yet the stream, that from its rocky source,
Clearer than amber, seeks a downward course.
Unstrung his sinews, dimmed with death his eyes,
Weighed to the ground his ponderous shoulder lies.
Ah! what avails him now his willing toil,
To cleave with heavy share the stubborn soil?
And yet their native vigor was not wronged
By Bacchic gifts or revelry prolonged.
The rivers swirling by their mossy brink,
Or sparkling fountains, furnish all their drink;
Leaves or the simple grasses are their fare;
Their healthful sleep unbroken by a care.

Georgics, III, 515–530.

ENVOI

AERE PERENNIUS

The wild fig sprouts upon Messala's tomb
And with its root splits wide the marbled room.
While Crispus on his shattered biga borne
Some impudent muleteer will laugh to scorn.

But these, my pages, never a thief can steal;
Age after age shall but increase their weal.
When all things else in common ruin lie,
These, my memorials, shall never die.

NOTES

Page 3. *"Unchanged the altar stands."* . . . This is now called an altar to the *Genius Loci,* and is said to be standing forty feet above the original level of the Roman street at this point of the Palatine. The sonnet was written in reliance on the usually accurate Baedeker, and is left in the hope that archaeologists may change their minds again.

Page 65. The late Walter Leaf told me that this is a very poor imitation of Cockney dialect. Yet it can not be worse than the usual type of "Yankee" speech to be found in British literature, and hence is allowed to stand.

Page 76. The name of the famous Senator from Wisconsin is accented, I am told, on the second syllable; but as the sense of the line allows no other name to be substituted, the true accent is disregarded.

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